LORDS Prayer

Vindicated, and Asserted against the Objections of *Innovators*, and *Enthusiasts*.

Translated from the *French* Original, Written by Monsieur *D'Espagne*, a Learned Presbyterian.

K. CHARLES the First, *EIKON BASILIKON Chap:* 16.

Some Men are so impatient, not to use in all their Devotions their own Inventions and Gifts, that they not only disuse, but wholly cast away and contemn the LORDS prayer; *which great Guilt is, that it is the Warrant and Original patent of all Set Liturgies in the Christian Church.*

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The *Translator* TO THE Reader.

ALbeit This and the Last Age have seen more Controversie in BRITAIN, *about the Lawfulness of Set Forms of Prayer, than all Former Ages have done, all the World over; Yet it could hardly have been thought that the* LORDS Prayer *would have run the same Fate with Humane Composers. To obviate all possible Objections against the use of this Prayer, is the design of this little Treatise, which was Originally write in* French *by a Learned* Protestant *Minister, who has likewise published a Discourse of Popular Errours, with great Ingenuity. It's true, that the Learned Doctor* Hammond, *Doctor* Falkner, Joseph Mede, *and others have sufficiently vindicated the using of Set Forms; but none has with such brevity, perspicuity, and nervousness asserted our Blessed SAVIOURS Form, as our Author has done. It was well said by an Eminent Member of the* Westminister *Assembly,* GOD forbid that ever I should kneel down

down to my Devotions, and rise without saying the *LORDS* Prayer; *And when some Leading* Remonstrators *in the* West *of* Scotland *begun tacitely to disuse it, The General Assembly wrote a Letter, charging them with Innovation, and intreating them to return to a better mind, So that this Novel practice is no true Mark of a Sound* Presbyterian, *but rather an evidence to the contrary.*

As for this Translation, it was undertaken at the desire of One, whose Command I judged it a Crime to disobey, And if it shall be any wayes Serviceable to undeceive Well Meaning, but Misled persons, Or to Confirm others in their pious Usage, I shall think my Labour well bestowed; But however, I am assured the few hours employed in this Task, were not wholly thrown away.

The Use of the LORDS PRAYER,

Vindicated against the Objections of Modern Innovators.

WE Read in the Gospel, of the Lunatick Person, that the unclean Spirit wherewith he was possest, did *sometimes cast him into the fire, and sometimes into the water*, these contrary Elements. Me thinks there a great Resemblance of this in matters of Religion; For it would seem that same evil Spirit makes it his work to drive Men from one extream of Superstition into another. The Church of *Rome* in all her Acts of Devotion affects an endless Repetition of the *Pater Noster*, out of an opinion that the words themselves, or the frequent reiterating of them, carries some secret Magical Vertue in it. Many now adays have run into the quite contrary superstition, shunning the very words of this Prayer, *as a stone of stumbling, and Rock of Offence.* others who dare not be so bold as wholly to condemn the use of this Prayer, yet startle to repeat it in their daily Devotions, and chuse rather to pass it over in silence. So that this Prayer is in a manner banished out of Families, and Publick-meetings, where it used formerly to re-sound: This light which was put upon a

candlestick

candlestick to give light to those that are in the house, is now buried under a bushel: If it were discarded and laid only aside only by Hereticks, or prophane Wretches, we would tax them with Irreligion and contempt of our Holy Saviour. But since these people profess themselves to be otherwise Orthodox Christians, we are no whit astonished at this Novelty, though formerly we would have abhorred it as a prodigious Innovation.

Now to state the question aright, we are not so wedded to the Letter, as to condemn all other Forms of Prayer, or that we will not admit of any other expressions. But other Prayers may be said, and this not left unsaid. It's a bold adventure to attempt the total obliterating of the memory of such a Prayer. A Prayer used hitherto in all the Churches of GOD, Ancient and Modern, throughout the Universal World. A Prayer endited by the Eternal Wisdom, our ever blessed Mediator and Redeemer, who offers up our Prayers unto GOD, and is perfectly acquainted with all the secrects of the Father's Breast. The most full and comprehensive Form that can be devised, and which contains all the reasonable Requests that can be imagined. A prayer, which is the Epitome, Mirror, and Patern of all other prayers. A Prayer which reconciles wonderful Brevity, with great copiousness and

and variety of Matter: As if it made a Camel pass through the Eye of a Needle. A Prayer, which contains more Histories and Mysteries than it does Words. In short, a Prayer the most Methodical, Emphatick, and Divine, that can be composed. For all the parts of this Prayer are admirable: for a beautiful Symmetry, regular Measures, and exact Proportion: All is full of Luminaries, which give mutual Light to one another. One Article calleth upon one another (a deep calls to deep) Nay, these very persons who dislike it, must confess that all the ingenious Men upon Earth, and all the Angels in Heaven, were never able to frame the like on't.

Did then Our Blessed Saviour give us this Prayer that we should never say it at all? On the contrary, he tells us, Pray thus, *Our Father which art in Heaven.* To this its answered, Christ bids us pray thus, that is to say, to this purpose, but not in the same words precisely; Well, be it so! But when he says, (*Luke* 11. 2.) *When you pray, say, Our Father which art in Heaven.* Does he forbid us to pray in these Words; Because he teaches us to say, *Our Father*, &c. Must we infer that we should not say it? And it is silly to alledge, That if it were a Command, we should use that Prayer constantly, and never say an other. This is all one as if you should affirm,

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we are not commanded to pray to God, because the Apostle says, *Pray always*, 1 *Thess.* 5 17. As if the meaning of this were, that we ought to do no other work at all but pray to God. But supposing it be not a Command, and that Christ has not enjoyned us to say this Prayer always, neither has he forbidden us the frequent use thereof, far less discharged us ever to say it at all, It is a weak pretence, that it is sufficient to express our Saviours meaning and intention in this Prayer, though we repeat not his very words. For must we suppress his words in order to express his meaning Or can we better express Christs sence and meaning, than by using his own words?

What can they then plausibly object against the ordinary use-making of the Lords Prayer? Doubtless it must be this.

Either it is not lawful,
Or it is not necessary,
Or it is not expedient.

Let us consider these in order, it is unlawful to say this prayer? This cannot be: For then it were unlawful to read it, nay we be hooved to raise out these two passages of Scripture where it is set down, *Mat. 6. Luke 11.* It signifies nothing to say, many abuse it; This is the Argument which our Adversaries adduce to hinder the Common People from reading the Bible. If the Devil himself, and his Infernal

fernal Agents in their Charms employ sentences out of the Psalms and Gospels, should we wholly abstain from using these Passages? If it be unlawful to utter them superficially, shall it be unlawful to use them devoutly? And if we are allowed in prayer to use our own words, shall we be forbidden to imploy our Saviours words, which are the Rule of ours.

It is therefore lawful; But, say they, it is not necessary. Suppose it be not necessary to say the Lords prayer, it is necessary to let it alone? If it be indifferent to say or not to say it, must we for a matter of indifference bring in a devision in the Church, affect novelty, break established order, and beget Scruples of Conscience? Besides there are degrees of Indifference, as well as of necessity. Would they say, that the using or ommitting this Prayer, is in the same Rank of Indifferency, as the eating of, or abstaining from certain meats? Surely that which Ministers to Edifying cannot be wholly indifferent. Will they say, that our Saviours words tends not to Edification? Albeit they dare not positively own this, yet in effect their arguing amounts to no less; For they maintain, that it is not expedient to say the Lords Prayer: This is the very Hinge of the Dispute, and Pinch of the Controversie.

Why then is it not expedient to say this prayer in the expres words of the Holy Jesus: What great inconveniences do arise from

thence

thence? What prejudice to God's Glory? What hindrance to Man's Salvation? What Rule to the Churches Edifice?

Upon this head they alledge.

That we should not be confin'd to words.

That there is hazard of Idolizing the words, by saying them so often.

That our taking heed to the Syllables, stints the Spirit, and diverts the thoughts.

That this frequent Repetition is the vain babbling condemned by our *Saviour*.

That this Prayer does not sufficiently enumerat all our particular wants.

That *it is* differently worded by two Evangelists, to shew that we should not take notice to the words wherein it is compil'd.

That the Apostles themselves never made use of it.

That many cannot say it, but to their condemnation; because it oblidges every man to beg forgiveness of his sins, upon condition that he forgive his Enemies.

That it is not suitable to a dying man, because he has no Longer need to say, *Give us our daily bread.*

That it was never intended for a Prayer, but only for a Rule and Patern of Devotion.

And lastly,

That in their dayly Prayers, they comprehend the substance thereof, albeit in different words.

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To all these, I shall in the first place return a General Answer, which strikes at the Root of most of their Objections.

It is unquestionably evident, nor can these men deny it; That under the old *Dispensation*, God prescribed *Set* Forms of prayer, and other Religious Actions, to be repeated word by word. Such was the form wherewith the Priests blessed the People, as you may read in the 16 of *Numbers*. Such was the form of Thanksgiving, appointed at the offering of the First Fruits *Deut.* 26. Such was the payer & Protestation expressly enjoyned those that came to pay the Tithe of the third year, *Dut.* 26. Such also were the Forms of Prayer, which *Moses* usually said when the Ark went forward, and wen it rested, *Num:* 10. 35, 36. Of the same nature was the Form of prayer and Thanksgiving, which were daily sung in the Church, For were not the *Psalms* most part prayers of Thanksgivings? And were they not commonly said and Sung?

I shall not insist upon this, that each Company of Singers, were expressly tyed to certain Psalms as to a Task, which is clear from the Title of these Psalms. The 92 *Psalm* was sung every Sabbath-day, as the inscription plainly imports. Now consider, why would God appoint Prayers, couched in verse, if it were not

not on purpose that they should be said *verbatim*? For it is well known, how difficult it is to change the words of a Line, that is fetter'ed in poetick numbers: Moreover, We have several Psalms wherein God has appointed ev'n the observation of the Letters of the Alphaber, the 25 Psalm, which is a prayer, as to the substance coincident with the Lords Prayer, begins almost every Verse accor ing to the order of the *Hebrew* Alphabet. The 34, 111, the 112, and the 119 are of the same contrivance, especially this last mentioned, in each of its Stanza's, answering eight times to the number & order of the twentie two Letters. It is visible, GOD intended this Expedient for a help to mens memories, that so even the most forgetfull might easily retain the words of these Holy Verses, whose Initial Letters proceeded in an Alpeabetical Order. Would He then had them neglect the words, when he ordained the punctual rehearsing of every single Letter? To this I might add, that some Psalms (as for instance the 118 and the 134,) are penned by way of dialogue between the Priests and People, this alternative discourse, consisting in reciprocal communication of the one with the other, could not be keept up without exact Observation of the words of their mutual intercourse.

Besides, In the Reformation of the Church, by that good King *Hezekiah*, when the publick

lick Liturgy was to be re-eſtabliſhed, the Levites were commanded to praiſe the Lord with the words of *David* and *Aſaph* the Seer; That is, to ſay or ſing the very words of the Pſalms, 2 *Chron.* 29. 30 It appears alſo, that at the Celebration of the Paſs over, there was a ſet Hymn alwiſe made uſe of upon that ſolemn occaſion. And our bleſſed Lord himſelf after he had eat the Paſſover, and was then preparing himſelf for death, did not ſtick to ſay it, and cauſed his Diſciples bear a part with him in the Recital thereof; *Mat.* 26, *verſe*, 30.

If our Modern Bigots, who condemn the uſe of the Lords Prayer, had lived in thoſe days, I doubt me they would have cenſured the wiſdom of God for preſcribing Set Forms of Prayer, and obliging the Church to ſay them Word for Word.

For the ſame *Arguments*, they muſter up againſt the uſe of this Prayer, the ſame inconveniencies they find in it, the ſame ſhifts and evaſions whereby they decline the repeating it; All this might have been alledged againſt the Forms of Prayer, of Bleſſing and of Thankſgiving which God impoſed upon his *Ancient* People, Could they not have ſaid that it was not fit to be confined to the words of theſe Formularies, and that it was ſufficient to ſpeak to the ſame purpoſe, that the Spirit ſhould not be limited, that by being taken up with words, good thoughts are loſt, that theſe were continual

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Repetitions, that these Set Forms did not express all that was necessar to be desired, that there was hazard of making Idols of them, and in sum, that it was expedient to suppress the use of them? 'Tis a surprising thing that God Almighty did not foresee these inconveniencies, I strange that these persons have not as yet laid aside the singing of Psalms. For if their Maxime hold weight, it is as ill to sing them, as to say the Lords prayer. If we must not be tyed up to the words of this prayer, why should we be tyed up to the words of the Psalms, if the Spirit should not be stinted, it is more stinted by the words of this prayer then by these of a psalm? If the expressions of this prayer divert the thoughts of him that prayeth, cannot the singing of Psalms jumble and discompose them too? If this prayer should not be said over and over again, if it do not specifie all occurrences, if there is hazard of idolizing the words thereof, may not the same be said of any Psalm whatsoever? nay and much more, for we sing many Psalms which we are not so much concerned in, or wherein we have not so great Interest as in the LORDS Prayer. In them we meet with prayers expressly Dedicate for the *Jewish* Church, relating to bypast occurrences, and which by no means reach unto us. There we have Petitions, Imprecations, reasonings, Complaints, which were Divine in *David's*

David's mouth, but in ours they are much more debatable than the Lord's Prayer is. Why then doth this Prayer go more against the grain with us, than these Prayers contained in the Psalms? Add hereunto, that the Psalms as they are sung in our vulgar languages, are the production of Human industry, and the work of a Poets brain; So that such a Composure, tho never so excellent, is in now sense so Divine as the Lords Prayer: Why then, shall there be more inconveniences in saying the words of our Saviour, than in singing those of mens introducing. Furthermore, since in stead of the Lords Prayer, we judge it more proper to have Forms of our own Composing, or extemporary effusions; Why do we not, in stead of Psalms, daily compose Hymns purely new to be sung in the Church? It is for want of Poetick Raptures, that we are obliged to hold by a constant tenor of Psalms? Now if it be Edifying to say and repeat them in their own proper terms, why not also the Lords prayer, which is the abstract of all the prayers contained in the Psalter.

But having said thus much in answer to these Objections in gross, I come now to examin each of them in retail.

Obj. 1. They alledge in the first place, that we should not confine our selves to Words.

Answ. This Maxim taken universally, and without distinction, is false, and of mischievous consequence; For if it should hold, we must

reject the Reading of the Bible, for in reading thereof, we must keep close to the Lett we must not translate it, for in the matter of a version we must come as precisely near to the Original as is possible. A Paraphrase is never so much to be trusted to, and the alteration of one word sometimes alter the whole sense. In Sacred History, we must of necessity retain the proper names of Places and Persons. In the Law we are bound to take care of the least jot, and the smallest point.

2. But the objection is ambiguous; For if they mean, that we are not so tyed up to the words of this prayer as to be precluded from using all others; Thus far we are both agreed. But if they mean under pretence of this liberty, that we must neglect, or lay aside this form of prayer, we beg leave to dissent from them. For, because Christ allows us to use our own expressions, must we bury his? because our words are current, must we cry down these of the Holy Ghost? Nay on the other side, if ours be good, how much better are these which he himself hath taught us? So far should we be from shunning the language of God, that on the contrair we should do our outmost endeavour to make our selves familiarly acquainted with it. And I wish to God, we are so well versed in it, that we could have it alwise in our mouth?

Obj. 2. But here we are allarmed with a great danger, that by puting such a value on the

the words of this Prayer, its to be feared we make an Idol of it.

Answ. 1. This is really a strange Paradox, that the Words of this Prayer, which teach us to shun Idolatry, should be suspected by us as capable to betray us unto that sin. For this Prayer teacheth us to invocat only, *Our Father which is in Heaven*, to ascribe *Kingdom*, *Power*, and *Glory* to Him alone. May not these Folk as rationally conclude, that we are in hazard of Idolizing the second Commandment, if we repeat it too often? Will we not make an Idol of that Command which forbids Idols? Sure I am the Church of *Rome* did not fall into Idolatry, by too frequent rehearsing the words of that Commandment, but by neglecting of them, nay expunging them out of her Catechisms and Manuels which they put in the Laity's Hands.

2. But may not one also turn an Idolater of the Words of the Institution in Bamptim? must we not turn them out of doors likewise, to avoid Idolatry? And are not the words of Consecration in the Eucharist, *Hoc est corpus meum*, lyable to the same peril? The grossest Idolatry in the World is bottom'd on the speaking these Words misunderstood. Must we then let them alone altogether? or should we not use them as oft as we rehearse the Institution of the Lord's Supper? Nay I shall add further, the superstitious *Jews* made an Idol of the

the name *Jehovah*, telling that the pronuncing thereof, was able to work the greatest Miracles, in so much as to remove Mountains; Now, should their Superstition hinder us from pronouncing the proper Name of GOD, or must we every day coin a new Name for the Almighty, lest His usual Name being too frequently uttered, become an Idol at the last?

3. Moreover, There is the same hazard in any other Prayer whatsomever, which is pretended in reference to the Lord's Prayer. For cannot a Man Idolize the words of a Form, though newly contrived? Do not we know that Men are naturally fond of Novelties? And must we then wholly refrain the exercise of Prayer, to keep us intirely out of the reach of Idolatry?

Object. 3. Now follows another Objection, which aims at the making Christ contradict himself: For (say they) Christ has condemned vain Repetitions in Prayer: But so it is, the Use of the Lord's Prayer is a perpetual Repetition.

Answ. 1. Consult the 6 *Ch.* of *St. Matthew*, the 7 and following Verses. There you will find our Saviour prescribed that prayer, to hinder vain Repetitions, But *when you pray* (saith he) *use not vain Repetitions*, but pray after this manner, *Our Father*, &c. And shall we call that a vain Repetition, which is given us as an Antidote against vain Repetitions? Would

Christ

Christ cure one Disease by another of the same nature, or cast out one Devil to bring in another?

2. Our Saviour doth not condemn all Repetitions, without exception; For he himself, when he was in his Bloody Agony reiterated the same words thrice in one Evening, *Father, if it be possible, let this Cup pass from me*, Matt. 27. 39, 40. And in the self same Psalm (to wit the 136.) every Verse ends with this burden, *For his Mercy endureth for ever*. And these words are six and twenty times Geminated.

3. What Repetition then are forbidden? Such as are vain. Now they are vain, if we are of opinion that the multiplying of them has any vertue and efficasie in it. They are vain also, if they be void of understanding, faith, or affection. But the Repetition of one Prayer, animated with that fiduciary and fervent application of the *Spirit* to God (wherein the *Life* and *Soul* of Prayer consists) can never be vain. As on the contraty a prayer destitute of that Spirit, will certainly be vain, though it be once repeated, and no more. Besides, if I may renew the same thoughts I had formerly, why may I not resume them in the same words, wherewith they were formerly cloathed? perhaps there is as much vanity in the minutly reiterated sighs of some Modern Z-lots as in the reiterating our Saviours Expressions.

4. Again,

4. Again, I strange that these men pretend such an averseness to Repetitions, since the most part of their devotions are built thereupon. A Repetition consists not only in saying over again the same words, but also in inculcating the same thing tho under various terms. Is it not a Repetition, if one having named dirt, should a little after call it Mire? Or having mentioned a *Sword*, he should immediatly talk of a Rapier? Are not the *Synonimies* and Circumlocutions, wherewith their *Prayers* are stuffed, so many Repetitions?

5. Furthermore, it *is* observable; that the passage objected to us (*Mat: 6. 7.*) doth not only forbid vain Repetitions, but also multitude of words? Why are not these people apprehensive, that the prolixity of their prayers, which are often equal in length to a long winded Preachment, is as vain, as the saying the Lords prayer once over? Or is the prolixity of their Devotions more contrary to vain babling then the brevity of this? Paradventure, they'l put the question, how many times a day, or in one hour must we say it? But this is all one as if they should ask how how often should we pray to God. For we are commanded to pray always; not that God requireth of us an uninterupted act of Devotion, but it ought never the less to be frequent. Moreover, the true value of our prayers consists in weight, and not in number, or in Measure.

Object

Object. 4. Proceed we to the next Exception which is thus touched. The words of him that prayeth should accompany or follow his thoughts: But during his attention to the Lords prayer, his good thoughts will go astray, and his mind will be diverted.

Answ. 1. This is a huge mistake, and its an odd thing to say, that the words of Christ are diversive of good thoughts. Did they but understand this prayer a right, they would not talk at this rate. Is it possible for us to have better thoughts in prayer, than these which are wrapt in the words of this Form?

2. *It* is callumnicus, I had almost said blasphemous, to assert that they betray the *Spirit* to wandrings and aberrations; whereas on the other side, they guide and regulat it. Can we marshal our thoughts better, than by putting them in the Order Chalked out by our Blessed Saviour.

3. It is false and abominable, to say, that the words by which we receive the Spirit of God, divert and turn aside the Spirit of man. For his prayer is a portion of the Evangelick Doctrine. *that hearing of Faith*, by which we receive the Holy Spirit. *Gal:* 3. 2.

4. Are these persons so replenished with good thoughts, that having bestowed whole hours in displaying their own Conceptions at their pleasure, they cannot spend two or three Minuts on the Lords prayer.

5. But

5. But if we must cashier the words of this prayer, on pretence that they do not alwayes jump right with the thoughts which may spring up in our mind in the act of prayer, I would enquire at these Gentlemen, when any one of them bestirs his gift in publick, is he sure that all the thoughts of his hearers will hit exactly to a Hairbreadth with his thoughts, or with the expressions he stumbles upon? It would be a difficult task for him in a throng meeting to find me out one single man so perfectly concurring and unison with him; do not then his Auditors run the same reisque to have their devout thoughts diverted by his expressions, or is it more disturbing to hear a prayer of our Saviours dictating, to which we have prepared and adjusted our thoughts before hand, than to hear one of a mans composure, whose thoughts outrun and often stifle ours?

Objct. 5. And this may suffice to boot for a Reply to the next allegation made by them; The Spirit (say they) should be at liberty, and not pent up within the narrow bounds of a formulary.

Answ. 1. And must the Spirit of man, in order to its freedom, be licentious and irregular? or is the saying the Lords prayer an intollerable slavery? God of his mercy grant us alwayes the liberty of saying it.

2. This prayer is apparently short in words, but

but in substance it is of so large extent as to comprehend Heaven and Earth, the present Age and all future Generations. And are these men of such a vast and unlimited spirit, that this cannot do their turn?

3. Or if it be a captivity to hear the Lord's prayer said, is the Spirit of the Hearers more enthralled by hearing our Saviours prayer, than giving ear to the effusion of a meer man?

Object. 6. The next objection we are amused with, is, the Lords prayer does not descend to particulars; it expresses our need only in general terms, but they should as occasion requires, be particularly and affectionatly pressed and insisted upon.

Answ. 1. In all appearance, our Antagonists are afraid God does not hear them sufficiently, unless they point out with the Finger, and decipher by piecemeal, all their petty wants. And indeed, many in stead of offering up prayers to God, seem to give him Informations, and that, under pretext of being particular. Severals also naming particulars, do but vent their impertinency; and others by mistake, in stead an Egg, pray for a Scorpion. I grant it is often necessary to be particular, but this requires great discretion, which is not every mans talent. General requests, such as these of the Lords prayer, may be compared unto Stars, which have a fixed seat and regular motion

tion. But when we offer at things in Hypothesi, we descend into the second Region of the Air, where all is turbulent and variable, and you shall meet with a continual justling of reasons, like waves tossed by contrary winds.

2. Besides, if a man should undertake to mention all the mercies needful or expedient for him, he should never come to a close of praying. Can any person alive particularize all things requisite either to his being or well being? all the kinds of temptations? all the depths of Satan? all his own iniquities? *Who can understand his Error?* (*Ps.* 19. 12.) and moreover, all the necessities of the Church Universal, and of every individual Member therein? how then should we conclude our Imperfect prayers, and with what supplement to amend their lameness? undoubtedly we must have recourse to general terms, under which all particulars are implicitly comprehended. As for instance, after having specified such and such sins, and not being able to make a plenary enumeration of all others, must we not say in general *forgive us our trespasses*? Wherefore I retort the Argument, since it is impossible for us to compile a prayer including all particulars, we must necessarily make use of one, whose generality is comprehensive of all particulars imaginable.

Object. 7. But, say they, we no where read that the Apostles ever said this Prayer. *An-*

Anſ: 1. This Reaſon is not at all concluſive. A negative Argument is not to be drawn from Scripture in a matter of Fact, which abſtracts from fundamentals of Faith. We do not find in the Sacred Hiſtory, that the *Jews* obſerved the year of *Jubile*, one of the moſt material points in the *Ceremonial Law*; Yet doubtleſs they did celebrate it, otherwayes GOD would have infallibly challenged them for ſuch a hainous neglect. We do not read that the Apoſtles baptized in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, as they were commiſſionat to do, ſhall we thence inferr that they did not Baptize after this Form?

2. I ſhould rather argue thus, Chriſt dictated this Form of Prayer unto them; Therefore they did uſe it. Is it credible, that having deſired a Form of a Prayer, and Chriſt having dictate them one, word for word, they never made uſe of it for all this?

3. And albeit they had not; the Apoſtles were endued with a Spirit which directed them in Praying, as well as in Preaching. But dare we pretend to that infallible Spirit which dictates ſuch prayers to us as it did to them? Are we ſure, we do not trip, no more than they did, either as to Matter or Form?

Object: 8. In the next place, they ask us a Queſtion. This prayer, ſay they, is ſet down in two of the Evangeliſts, (in the ſixth of *Mat:* and 11 of *Luke*) and that in different expreſſions; and which is more, the one of theſe

Holy penmen omits what the other has: How then must we say it? Whether as it is worded by *St. Matthew* or *St. Luke*? All this clearly demonstrats that our Saviour never intended we should adhere to the words of this prayer.

Ans: 1. If this Argument took place, in the Celebration of the Lord's Supper, we ought not to use the words of Institution: For they are differently related in four different Books of the New Testament. So that one of the Evangelists in recording of them, has omitted this important Clause, *Do this in remembrance of Me.* Should we then in this action totally reject our Saviours words, on pretence of this diversity, which is to be found in the Gospel. St. *Paul* did not understand it so, when he shews the *Corinthians*, after what manner they should celebrat the Lord's Supper, he tells them, *I received of the Lord, that which I also delivered unto you*, and then he repeats the down right words spoke by our Saviour at the Institution of that Sacrament, 1 *Cor:* 11.

2. It is a bad Inference, that we should not take notice of the words, because of the variety to be found in them. On the contrary, when GOD repeats the same thing in different words, we ought more carefully to observe them; For this diversity gives light to the meaning of the Scripture, for example, when one of the Evangelists sayes, *Forgive us our debts*, the other explains it by saying, *forgive us our sins*, we may indifferently lay hold of one or other of these phrases, both being equally dictated by

by Christ Jesus. Is the choice so difficult to make, or must we cast away both, because Christ is the Author of them both?

3 As for that part of the Objection, that the Conclusion or Doxologie (*For thine is the Kingdom*, &c. is left out by one of the Evangelists, the answer is easie, its just as if we should argue, we must not celebrate the Eucharist because one of the Evangelists (to wit St. *John*) speaks not one sylable on't. If this Doxologie is not to be found in St. *Luke* must it be hudled up in silence, albeit it is set down in St. *Matthew*? Or must we upon this account disuse this prayer wholly, although it be recorded in both these Evangelists? There are several psalms written on the same Subject, as 14 and 53 are coincident: Yet there is some passage in the one which is not in the other; and must they both be sent a packing?

Object. 9. The next accusation against the use of the Lords prayer is, that a gross absurdity is consequently thereupon. In it we pray for *our dayly bread*. Now, say they, put the case a man be going to die, either gasping upon a bed of sickness, or upon a Scaffold, waiting the fatal blow, should we still petition for bread? To what purpose should he pray for a thing he no longer needs? and which can be no longer serviceable to him.

Ans. Several things may be replyed to this Objection: 1. If this petition should only be put up by such as are ascertain'd of Life, it could never be used at all: For these who are

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in the moſt perfect health and vigour, do not know but the next minute the night of Death may overtake them: So that this would infer, Chriſt had taught us to ask that, which we ought never to ask.

2. As there is none who can promiſe himſelf the continuation of Life for one day, ſo no man can tell if that day ſhall be his laſt. How many recover beyond all hope, when they are at the gates of death? albeit then a man were on the very brink of Eternity, ſince he knows not the time of his departure, ſhould he boldly renounce his *daily bread*, and the Divine bounty which is the ſource of all his enjoyments, as if he were aſſured it was no further needful.

3. When we pray for *bread*, it is alwayes conditional, in caſe we have futher need thereof; in caſe our dayes be prolonged in the land of the living: And not otherwayes. Not is there any impertinence in this requeſt, or is it not rather our duty to ſpeak always thus?

4. It is well known, that this petition is not reſtricted to food alone, for when I name *bread*, I preſuppoſe all that is neceſſary to life, as Air, Reſpetation, *&c.* And may I not ask theſe things for the time I have to live, tho it were but one ſingle moment, in order to the glorifying of God?

5 Grant he who is at the point of Death needs not any longer pray for his *daily bread*, for all that, has he no more need to ſay, *Forgive us our ſins, and lead us not into temptation*?

6. It

6. It is not Christs intention that any man should pray for bread to himself alone; but he commands us to pray for it to others, saying *Give us.* If then a dying man cannot, or will not ask bread for himself, is he not oblidged in Charity to ask it for such as outlive him, and to pray for posterity?

7. And lastly, Because expiring sick men, or dying Malefactors, having no need of bread, must we thence conclude, that all others should abstain from praying for it? By the same reason they should cease to eat and drink.

Object: 10. Many also scruple to say the Lords prayer, because it obleidges them to say, *They forgive them that sin against them.* Now a man has not alwayes an intention to forgive. This is a plausible pretext: For if I entertain vindictive thoughts, with what confidence can I say that I forgive? Do I not make my self much more guilty by so speaking? For why, this Clause contains an Imprecation I make against my self, *Viz:* If I do not pardon, I desire not to be pardoned. Pursuant to this, many whose office leads them to pray in publick, abstain from this prayer, lest any of their Heares who joyn in prayer with them should be found liars to GOD.

Ans: 1. Much surely may be said on this tickliſh Question, whether or no a man who feels in himself any risings of hatred and revenge should suspend the use of the Lords prayer on this head, I say, if he cannot say this

this prayer, neither can he make use of any other: So that to forbid a man the Lord's prayer upon this accounts, is to prohibit him the exercise of prayer in any form or manner whatsoever. The consequence is easily demonstrable by many Reasons. First, He cannot make a good prayer, if it be not conform (at least in the substance) to the Lords prayer. Now this prayer oblidges him to say, that he forgives his enemies, so that if he do not say it in these express words, he must do it upon the matter. Besides, can he offer up any prayer without begging forgivenness of his sins? And since that forgivenneses promised him only on condition that he forgive others, can he seek or expect it on another score? For *if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses*, Mat: 6 15 Nay, he cannot ask any thing else of GOD if he be not ready to forgive. If he bring his Gift to the Altar, he must first be reconcilled to his Brother, otherwise all his offerings and all his supplications are of no value. Add hereunto that no man can offer up a prayer without protesting that he is willing to obey GOD; For when we beseech GOD to grant us our will, we promise we will obey His. Now it is an Article of the Will of GOD, that we forgive these who injure us. I say then, if Rancour and Malice binder a man from saying the Lord's prayer, the same Reason will justifie a total Cessation from prayer? See what is the natural tendency of these Mens opinion: For their Argument

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not only strikes at the Lords prayer, but and at all these which they themselves are wont to conceive.

2. Now let us consider the pretended hindrences: That Man, say they, who in stead of forgiving burns with revange, whose Soul is wholly plunged in gall, and filled with implacable wrath, can such a man say the Lords prayer? To this I answer, the question in hand is not concerning those, who are entierly possed with a spirit of revange, and who have no design to abate of their malice: But the debate is concerning such as through infirmity find it uneasie to forgive, and feel in themselves the flesh warring against the Spirit. If then I be in these Circumstances, can I say, *forgive me my sins*, since I find difficulty to say, that *I forgive them that sin against me*? I answer again, among the sins I crave pardon for, I reckon this is one, the difficulty to forgive. I begg pardon for this, that it is a difficult thing for me to grant pardon. And I pray for Grace, that may enable me to forgive. So that the meaning of this clause shortly is this, forgive me, as I pray thou would grant me grace to be able to forgive. Can any man stumble at this? Nay, is not every Christian oblidged to speak so? And it is to no purpose to alledge, that there is a great difference betwixt saying that we forgive, and saying, we desire ability to forgive For he who sincerely desires ability to forgive has already begun to forgive. But if this for

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giveneis proceed only from a heart perfect appeased, shall we abstain from praying God till we arrive at perfection? Till we love our Neighbour perfectly, that is, till we have fulfiled the whole Law.

3. But after all has been said, suppose it absolutely unlawful to say this Prayer as long as a man is in the least provock'd with passion, is he therefore discharged to say it, when the smallest spark of anger is extinguished, and his heart is cleansed throughly from all hatred? If he be not in a condition to say it at one time, must he abstain from it for ever? And moreover, must the whole Body of the Church be interdicted the use of the Lord's Prayer, for the sake of a few revengeful tempers, that cannot use this Form. Must the peevish passions of some be a standing Rule to all? Finally is it welldone of him who prays in publick, to accommodat himself rather to the malice of men, than to the prescription of our Blessed Saviour?

Object: 11. Further yet, they plead for their excuse, that they comprehend the substance of the Lord's prayer in their usual Devotions, that they paraphrase it, which is all one upon the matter, albeit they have not the same expressions.

Anſ: 1. At this rate, they say not formally, *We forgive them that sin against us*; But they say it upon the matter: Now is there any greater inconvenience to say it in Christs very Words, than

than to say it in equivalent terms? and so forth through all the rest of the Lord's Prayer: For seeing they acknowledge, we ought to express its whole meaning, may we not use the words of it likewise?

2. On the contrary, when there is a debate about the commenting on a passage, it must be repeated *verbatim*, that we may see if the Paraphrase quadrate with the Text. Since then they paraphrase the Lord's prayer; why do they not repeat it, that we may discern if their paraphrase be agreeable to our Saviours Words?

3. But again, are their paraphrases of the same weight with our Saviour's Expressions? Is a paraphrase on Scripture equally authentical with the Holy Scripture it self? The words of the Lord's prayer are Canonical, for they are a portion of Sacred Writ. But these people dare not aver, that their prayers, or the words of them are Canonical. For can a prayer of Humane Composure serve for an infallible rule to a Ministers Auditors? You'l find most excellent prayers in *Apocrypha*, both as to Matter and Expression? Why then do we not put as great a value on them, as we do upon those who are contained in the Canonical Books? The reason is, because tho they were framed and conceived by men of great Piety and deep Judgement, yet they do not proceed from the Holy Ghost, in the same quality, perfection, and authority, as these

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that were pen'd by the Prophets, to which we dare not presume to compare ours, far less to that of Christ's dictating. It is also weakly objected, *That at this rate we should use no other prayer but it.* For that is just as one should say, it is not lawful to expound the Scripture, because our paraphrases or Interpretations are by no means so authentick as Scripture it self. We may paraphrase the Lords prayer by other prayers, but we are nowayes forbidden, under colour of our own paraphrases, to repeat it directly as it is set down.

Object: 12. I come now to their last Objection, wherein they fancy they discover a vast dale of subtilty. The words of this prayer, say they, were dictated for a patern of prayer, but not to be used as a prayer, they were intended for a Directory, not for a set Form.

Ans: 1. This is nothing else but meer quibling, and a silly evasion. Cannot these words be both a prayer, and a Model of prayer? Cannot a Building serve for a Model to another Building? are these things inconsistent?

2. It is to be remarked, Christ sayes not, pray to your Father, that his Name may be Hallowed, that he would give you your daily Bread. But take notice how he speaks; Say, *Our Father which art in Heaven*; Say, *Hallowed be thy Name*; Say, *Give us this day our daily Bread*; Say, *Forgive us*, Say, *Deliver us*, &c. Is not this a downright set Form of prayer? Can any body put his own words in our mouth bet-

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ter and more expresly? or when Christ Jesus appoints us to say them, does he mean the contrary, *Viz:* That we should not say them at all?

3. But supposing it was only given us for a patern, and not for a prayer; These men confess, that when I pray, I should alwayes keep the patern in my mind. If I ought still to have it in my mind, Why should I never have it in my Mouth?

4. If they refuse to say it as a prayer, why do they not at least say it as a patern or Directory? If they should thus address God, thy Son Christ Jesus has taught us to say unto Thee, *Our Father which art in Heaven*, &c. Are they afraid to lie in so speaking? Or do they fear that this Truth is not fitly told?

5. I say, the people must be continually taught to pray right, now it is beyond all contradiction, that it's impossible to make a good prayer, if it agree not, at least in substance, with our Saviours Formulary: Is it not then expedient that the people should often hear that Formulary, that they may know by what rule to square their Devotions. We blame the Church of *Rome*, that they do not rehearse the second Command to the people; Because this skipping it over hinders many from perceiving the Idolatry they are guilty of. And will not the suppressing of this Form cause the people, especially a number of poor Creatures that cannot read the Bible, altogether forget this prayer, and not know what rule is

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to be followed in their Addresses to GOD? In reality, these men do their utmost to raze the remembrance of the LORD's Prayer out of the minds of Men.

For the Close, Observe the difference betwixt the Lords prayer and our own Compositures. There is, so to speak, as wide a differance as betwixt the Tabernacle and the pattern God shewed to *Moses* on the Mount. The Pattern was heavenly, framed by the hand of Omnipotence; the Tabernacle was Earthly patcht up by the fingers of frail man. The Lord's prayar is all Celestial and Divine; our Devotions are in part the effect of human industry, for we have not the Spirit in perfection. This contrivance of our wit is always human and imperfect; But the Pattern is always perfect and Divine: No man breathing, is so learned or devout, but he is lyable to fealures in composing his prayers. They are subject to imperfection, excess, disorder, and many irregularities. We are not impeaceable on that side. We are alwise herein committing escapes, either by leaving out somewhat, or being too short upon one point, and too prolix on another, or in seting down our thoughts confusedly & out of due order. But in saying the *Lords* prayer, I am assured, I cannot miss speaking right that I omit nothing, that I vent nothing superfluous, that I do not extravague, that I am not guilty of rashness in my speech. Wherefore having conceived a prayer as well as I could,

could, I consider its defects, and to make amends for them, I make use of that which I know is free from imperfections. I mean that after I have offered up to God a prayer of my own making, I ought to beseech him to supsupply its deficiences; and to that effect I present him that prayer which his well beloved Son and my Redeemer has taught and commanded to say, when I approach the Throne of Grace.

I conclude than, it is our duty to say the Lords Prayer. We ought to say it, because Christ put it in our mouth. We ought to say it, because it is the marrow and abstract of all other prayers. We ought to say it, because it is the rule and Pole-star to guide us in our Applications to God. We ought to say it, for redressing the imperfections of all our other prayers. We ought to say it, because of its universality, as to all purposes, persons, times, or places. It is a Prayer said by all the Churches in the World: And it is no small comfort to me to bear my part in such a general Harmony. 'Tis a prayer I can make use of in prosperity or adversity, in peace or war, in sickness and Health, in Life and in Death. A prayer that may be said by Young and Old, Rich and Poor, Prince and Peasant.

It is not an astonishing thing, that we are grown Jealous and suspicious of our Saviours Words? If our pious Fore fathers, who underwent so great sufferings to have the liberty of saying this Prayer in a known language, who took

took so much pains to teach it us, that we might have it alwise in our mouth: I say, if they could but look out of their graves, and see us labouring even to forget that prayer, how severly would they rebuke us, and what names would they call us? But which is yet more, behold, Christ Jesus himself expressly enjoyns you to say it. Whom will you obey, whether your Saviour, or these who labour to perswad you to the contrary? Fear not, fear not to pronounce the words of Jesus Christ. Christ who dictated them will be your warrant at the Fathers hand, and will own your words, since they are likewise his own. Let them be alwayes carried about in your Hearts, and upon your Lips. I conjure you, my Brethren, by the reverence you bear to our Blessed Saviour, by the veneration you should have for his words, by the Love he has testified towards us in teaching us this prayer, by the interest you have in praying aright, and by the peace and comfort of the Church, let none snatch this precious Jewel from you, which the son of God has given you out of his own hands. And God grant that we may with one accord alwayes present our Supplications to *Our Father which is in Heaven: For his is the Kingdom, Power, and Glory, for ever, and ever,* Amen.

The

The LORD'S Prayer Paraphras'd,

In six Quadrains.

IN six Petitions CHRIST taught us to pray,
Whose Sacred Will dispute not but obey.
The GOD of Order doth require that we
Should Worship Him, in Truth, and Unitie,
And with enlarg'd Devotions, day by day,
Our fervent Love unto our Brethren pay,
Which Lovely Form Prescrib'd us we retain,
The Scope whereof the Following Lines explain.

O Heavenly Father Thou who art most high,
That madest all men of one fraternity.
We are Thy Children, Shew Thy Clemency
To us, that call, O GOD be ever nigh.

I.

Inflame our Zeal to Sanctify Thy Name,
That we, and ours, may Celebrate the same:
By Hon'ring Thee, to Hells reproach and shame;
O Thou Most Worthy of Immortal Fame.

II.

Thy Kingdom come, Thy Pow'r LORD display,
Reduce Thy foes, that all may Thee obey:
Rule in our Hearts, that we Thy Glory may
At last behold, hasten that Blessed Day.

III.

Thy Will be done by us in Truth and Love,
As by the Angels, and the Saints Above:

Great

Create in us clean hearts, that we may prove
Frumfull and Faithfull as the Turtle Dove.

IIII.

Our wants supply, while we live here below,
What's best for us in mercy, LORD, bestow,
Let right, and left hand Blessings on us flow,
That we Thy Love to Men on earth may shew.

V.

Our many sins which we commit each day,
O LORD, forgive for JESUS Sake, we pray,
As we express our Charitie alway,
To those, that evil for our good repay.

VI.

Let's not be tempted, LORD, above what we
Are able to withstand, by Pow'r from Thee,
Defeat the Tempters sinfull Subtiltie,
And from the Pow'r of evil set us free.

For all Dominions Thine, the Devils set,
The Kingdom's Thine, even Kings Thy Subjects be,
And Crowns and Scepters all shall vail to Thee.

O LORD Omnipotent, Thou dost excell,
All Pow'r is Thine in Heaven, and Earth, and Hell,
Men, Angels, Devils, Thy great facts do tell.

And Thine's the Glory, and shall ever be,
Whilest Time doth last, and to Eternitie,
O let us share in Thy Felicity.

Thus do we all desire, with one Accord,
Put to Thy Seal, and say, Amen. O LORD

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